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Department of State

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Origin

Info

For your information, the text of an article which appeared on the front page of the Baltimore Sun on June 27, 1958 is reproduced below. The article appeared under the by-line of Bynum Shaw.

Text of Article

Born, June 26—John Foster Dulles, United States Secretary of State, is being charged here with a monumental blunder in negotiations to effect the release of nine American soldiers held prisoner in Communist East Germany since their helicopter wandered over the border June 7. For two weeks without abatement military and diplomatic circles, not only American but German and allied, have been seething over Dulles's initial offer to deal with the East Germans if necessary.

His remark made at a press conference took the American Embassy here completely by surprise.

In first comments on the incident Embassy spokesmen here had declared that the United States would have no discussions with East Germany which the United States does not recognize and Dulles cut the ground out from under them.

His statement came after a Soviet official in Berlin had offered the services of his or the Czech and Polish governments as intermediaries.

Three days after Dulles made his offer the State Department reversed the Secretary's position and declared that the United States was holding the Russians responsible for the release of the nine captives. It is understood that the shift was the result in part of a strong letter from David K. Bruce, American Ambassador to West Germany, who warned the State Department in substance that Dulles had set forth an untenable position.

Drafted by:

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Clearance:

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Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was so upset by the Dulles declaration that he called Bruce to the chancellery to discuss it.

The Adenauer Government has steadfastly refused to negotiate with the puppet regime in the Soviet Zone and Adenauer felt that the United States was deserting him.

An American who was involved in the first phases of the incident said today that when Dulles offered to deal with "the kidnapers" the United States Army "practically had those men back."

"What Did We Get?"

"East Germany could have held out one more day at the most," he said. "All we needed was a strong statement from Washington that we weren't going to play games with the East Germans.

"And what did we get?"

He said--and his remarks are indorsed by at least a dozen other officials--that Dulles gave East Germany, hopeful of any slight shred of recognition, the hope that the United States will yield.

"Those men will stay there now," he said. "There's no telling when we'll get them out."

Belgian Case Noted

The Dulles statement also is credited with handing to the East Germans a diplomatic victory in the release of a Belgian airman last Saturday.

The Belgian, a NATO pilot, had been held since May 29 and, according to information here, Belgian action in the case was influenced by the apparent weakening of the United States attitude toward the East German regime.

On instructions from the Brussels Government, Leon Jacobs, Belgian consul general in Berlin, signed a protocol for the release of the airman after discussions with Otto Winzer, East German Deputy Foreign Minister.

Agreement Announced

While Belgium insists the action does not imply recognition of the Communist regime, the signature enabled the East German Government to announce an agreement between "plenipotentiaries of the German Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Belgium."

Since the State Department laid down its hard line, the United States has relied

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on military authorities to handle the negotiations for the release of the American soldiers.

Those negotiations now are stalled but there were indications today that the breakdown is temporary.

End Text

The Department proposes to deny, if asked, that a letter of the type described above has been received from the Ambassador or that the Chancellor called in the Ambassador to discuss the matter.

D Miller

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